



## AMERICAN CORNERS

### *Bringing America's Message to the World*

*"The establishment of the 'American Corner' in a noted Islamic institution shows the cooperation that exists as well as closing the distance between the West and Islam."*

— Radio Elshinta, Jakarta Indonesia

The United States has a long-standing commitment to spread the ideas and values of American democracy and civil society to foreign audiences and engage and maintain an open dialogue with people throughout the world. The goal of American Corners is to bring the true story of the United States to the people, counteracting negative preconceptions, maintaining an open dialogue, and building bridges of understanding. Resources found at the American Corners help individuals expand their skills and understand American values. In collaboration with regional bureaus and the posts, the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) plays a key role in providing support and direction to the development of American Corners worldwide.

#### Building a Network of Communication

- Currently, there are 180 American Corners: 84 in Europe and Eurasia, 38 in East Asia, 36 in Africa, 11 in South Asia, nine in the Middle East, and two in Latin America.
- The demand to open more American Corners is on the rise as more individuals are exposed to the benefits the Corners provide, and the Department is working to meet the need for more Corners throughout the world.

#### Opening a Window to America

- Each day thousands of young people around the world come to American Corners to pick up a book about life in the United States, apply to a U.S. college, e-mail a new pen pal living in Minnesota, or watch a video about the history of American jazz music.
- Often located outside of capital cities, American Corners bring a stronger American presence to those who have limited or no exposure to American culture or ideals.

#### AMERICAN CORNERS IN BRIEF

- Cost of opening: \$50,000
- Number in operation: 180
- Number under way: 104
- Annual visitors in Russia in 2003: 225,500

**Impact: "Many of our users didn't know there were Muslims in America until they read about it at our American Corner."**

— Jolo, Mindanao, Philippines

- Most American Corners consist of collections of books, magazines, music, and on- and off-line databases from and about the United States. Most American Corners have computers, television, and digital videoconference capabilities, providing a unique opportunity to bring American speakers to remote locations.

#### Promoting American Voices

- The heart of the American Corner is the commitment to active programs engaging local audiences at all levels:

visiting speakers give talks on U.S. global policies; alumni grantees from U.S. government programs share their experiences in the United States; digital video conferences cover sensitive but important issues such as HIV/AIDS or human trafficking; and exhibits illustrate the diversity of American society.

#### Forging Lasting Relationships

- American Corners, first launched by Embassy Moscow to reach out to populations located outside the capital, are partnerships with local institutions — the private sector, public libraries, universities, chambers of commerce, NGOs — to provide information about U.S. values and visions to foreign audiences.
- IIP provides the professional expertise to evaluate host institutions, identify appropriate information resources, and train both Embassy and American Corner staff through its field-based corps of Information Resource Officers and its Office of Information Resources. IIP publications, electronic products, and speakers are central to the resources and programs of all American Corners. These Corners are a dynamic public diplomacy resource and bring the true story of the United States to foreign audiences.

